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SUBJECT: WAR IN IRAQ & ITS IMPACT ON NOVEMBER 7 LEGISLATIVE  
ELECTIONS; GLOBAL WAR ON TERRORISM; NICARAGUAN UPCOMING ELECTIONS;  
NON PROLIFERATION; VENEZUELAN PRESIDENT HUGO CHAVEZ; AFGHANISTAN;  
THE UN; 10/23/06; BUENOS AIRES

## 1. SUMMARY STATEMENT

Weekend papers carry opinion pieces on the war in Iraq and on the finding of human remains at Ground Zero and their probable impact on the November 7 legislative elections; the Nicaraguan upcoming elections; US Senator Lugar's report on Non proliferation; Venezuelan President Chavez's influence on Latin America; the situation in Afghanistan; the appointment of Ki-Moon as the new UN Secretary General and the new scenario at the UN.

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Leading "Clarín," "La Nación" and "Perfil" published articles on Dr. Wayne Parrot's press conference, which was organized by the Embassy PAS section on October 18. TN Ciencia (Multicanal 14 - Cablevision 9 cable TV stations) aired a three-minute report on Parrot's statements.

## 2. OPINION PIECES

- "A civil war with 140,000 spectators"

Gustavo Sierra, international columnist of leading "Clarín," writes (10/21) "The civil war in Iraq is getting out of control and the 140,000 US soldiers are mere spectators. Not only is it a confrontation between Sunnis and Shiites but among Shiite factions. And US marines cannot enforce order in any sector of Iraq. It looks like generals are only expecting an order to evacuate.

"... One of the plans of the Bush administration to get out of the Iraqi 'swamp' consists of dividing the country into three natural sectors - that of the Kurds to the North, that of Sunnis to the center, and that of Shiites to the South, and to separate them with international forces. However, one can see that this may not be a guarantee for peace either. There will be infighting in the three territories."

- "The US: the president gets all the blame"

Oscar Raul Cardoso, international analyst of leading "Clarín," writes (10/21) "Something happens when an enthusiastic panegyrist becomes a stubborn detractor..., and particularly when that transformation becomes a political metaphor...

"Two names are involved in this metaphor - those of US President George W. Bush and renowned journalist Bob Woodward, whose third and most recent book 'State of Denial' has just been published...

"... The war in Iraq has become such a heavy burden that many

Republican candidates are now afraid of Bush attending their campaign rallies to support them. And the disaster of the war in Iraq is of such magnitude that even Bush himself has agreed to compare the conflict with the Vietnam War, particularly with the 1968 North Vietnam offensive that represented a turning point for the US willingness to continue with the war...

"Even if Bush loses the majority in one or both chambers, the superficial outcome will be less spectacular... However, Bush's last two years in the White House could be ineffective."

- "One fear, one vote"

Marcelo Cantelmi, international editor of leading "Clarín," writes (10/21) "It is a macabre blow of luck, but it will surely be viewed as good news by the G.O.P.'s popes. Perhaps they are wrong."

"The Republican party is heading for a sure defeat in the November 7 legislative elections. (US President) George W. Bush has used the phantom of terrorism to win elections..."

"The finding of human remains only days before crucial elections could refloat the fear of an attack just like the September 11 attacks, and it could scare away the images of the shocking defeat of allied troops in Iraq. However, it is an illusion."

"What one can actually see is that Americans acknowledge the danger but do not believe that Bush can deliver safety, but rather the opposite. And this news could cause an effect exactly the opposite to what Republicans expect."

- "The White House is concerned about Ortega's possible return"

Hugo Alconada Mon, Washington-based correspondent for daily-of-record "La Nación," comments (10/23) "27 years after having led the Sandinist revolution, Daniel Ortega asserts he is not the same any longer. He says that if he wins the November 5 presidential elections, he will reinforce the country's ties with the US and even

with the IMF. However, Washington's 'hawks' are afraid that he could become a new ally for the Castro-Chavez-Morales axis."

"... Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez's irruption in favor of Ortega further deepened the worries of the Bush administration's 'hawks.' However, Ortega is determined to promote an image closer to that of Alan García in Peru - that of a former president who learned from his mistakes and moderated his stances as a result of it."

- "WMD, a threat without borders"

Daily-of-record "La Nación" carries an op-ed story by Irma Arguello, an expert in national defense and security issues, who writes (10/23) "The world was shocked by North Korea's nuclear test. The news is shocking, although it may not be surprising. The use of WMD by terrorist nations or organizations has already been predicted as a palpable threat, which raises strong questions regarding the future of international security."

"Due to global interdependence, no nation can claim to be free from the consequences of terrorism, regardless of the ideology of its leaders..."

"The information contained in US Senator Richard Lugar's non proliferation report has now gained special importance."

"According to the report, there will be a 50-percent-risk of an attack with WMD in some city in the world in the next five years, and a 70-percent-risk of such an attack in ten years. According to the report, 2 to 5 new States could join the nuclear club in the next ten years..."

"A general belief is that a 'peripheral' country such as Argentina is somehow protected from such an attack. But the global extent of such an attack hints at a different reality. A national defense strategy cannot be isolated from what happens beyond its borders..."

- "Tactic and strategy"

Santiago O'Donnell, international columnist of left-of-center "Pagina 12," comments (10/22) "Hugo Chavez is the most influential political leader in Latin America, but his favorite candidates in Peru, Mexico, Ecuador and the UN ended up losing. The outcome of the voting has raised doubts about the efficiency of his international policy, but no one disagrees with the level of influence that the Venezuelan leader has reached in the region."

"According to Jorge Elbaum, professor at Universidad de Buenos Aires and Universidad de La Matanza, 'Chavez occupies the empty space left by the West's abandonment of Latin America.' 'A great part of such abandonment was occupied by a Keynesian Social-Democrat (populist) current, which ranges from Bachelet and Tabare Vazquez's rational populism to Chavez's binary populism. Only Colombia, Mexico (liberal states) and Cuba (communist state) are left out.'"

"... Nevertheless, in light of the most recent election results, some questions seem inevitable. Will Chavez's unquestionable regional leadership serve to strengthen integration in the medium term? Will it facilitate Mercosur's integration into the world?"

- "More gestures to Chavez - vote at the UN, summit and greater trade"

Carlos Burgueo, international columnist of business-financial "Ambito Financiero," comments (10/23) "Nestor Kirchner will maintain his relationship with Hugo Chavez. On the one hand, he will continue voting in favor of Venezuela's bid for the UN Security Council. Kirchner will do this in spite of the fact that negotiations for a third candidate have already started in the rest of the hemisphere."

"On the other hand, the Argentine Foreign Ministry will start working on a meeting between the two presidents to be held on November 3 in Montevideo, when the Ibero-American Summit in Montevideo is to take place. There will also be a new trade mission to Caracas aimed at boosting trade."

### 13. EDITORIALS

- "More opium crops in Afghanistan"

An editorial in daily-of-record "La Nacion" reads (10/21) "Five years after the invasion, the situation in Afghanistan is far from being the one originally planned. Not only were plans to democratize

and rebuild the country not put into practice but there also are areas in which not even the military dare walk. Last June, Amnesty International asked for urgent funds to help Afghanistan, a country which is down to a serious political and social crisis and confronted to increasingly tenacious Taliban's resistance."

"Tens of alleged insurgents die almost daily in joint operations carried out by local forces and the armed coalition in South Afghanistan. However, new rebel groups immediately appear in the region in a process that has overridden NATO's capabilities. This chaotic situation adds to another equally alarming fact - according to UN officials, opium crops in Afghanistan have increased by 59 percent this year..., which accounts for one-third of opium consumption in the world."

"... The importance of understanding illegal drugs' economy as a transversal issue that is related to security and development issues becomes more apparent. It is also to be noted that the income from illegal drugs traffic goes to terrorist organizations such as the Taliban regime, the FARC or the Islamic Jihad. Ties between terrorism and drug-trafficking are real, continue to increase and create a climate of fear and intimidation that is aimed at destabilizing institutions and creating a world that is incompatible with democratic values."

- "Venezuela and the UN Security Council"

The daily-of-record "La Nacion" editorializes (10/22) "In spite of the victorious announcements and statements made by Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez, who traveled all over the world in an attempt to obtain a non permanent seat at the UN Security Council for his country, reality has clearly revealed that the international community has rejected him...

"... The current situation is that there is no margin to think of a negotiation between Venezuela and Guatemala...

"The truth is that what is happening unfortunately has damaged the image of the entire region.

"It seems that the time has come to work on generating consensus so that a third candidate can obtain the support neither Guatemala nor Venezuela has obtained.

"Chile and Mexico seem committed to this effort, and Argentina should quickly follow suit. After all, Chavez's failure is shared by our country, which not only supported Venezuela's bid in its early stages but daringly promoted Mercosur's support in what seems to have been another foreign policy failure."

- "A new stage in the UN"

Leading "Clarín" editorializes (10/21) "With the appointment of Korean Ban Ki-moon as new UN Secretary-General, the UN has entered a new stage, which will be marked by the need to obtain great consensus to reform the UN and achieve greater efficiency in its task to promote international peace and security.

"... The UN has suffered tough blows to its credibility and ability to manage and solve conflicts. Some of them were due to external factors - the challenges posed by regimes and governments which disregard international commitments, and the US foreign policy's unilateralism in the war in Iraq. Others were the organization's reluctance to adapt itself to better the goals set forth by its Charter 61 years ago.

"This is why the new UN Secretary-General's main challenge will be to reform the institution and to bridge the gap between international laws and commitments and their actual enforcement."

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